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ABSTRACT

Population issues discussed are: (1) the growing elderly population in industrialized nations; (2) the debt crunch; and (3) immigration. The focus of the article on the elderly is Japan's elderly population, which will nearly double, from 10 to 18.7%, by 2010. In 1986, the Japanese government took steps to delay the age at which full pensions are received to prevent the bankruptcy of the social security system. Businesses agreed to raise the retirement age. The article on the debt crunch discusses Peru's foreign debt equal to 59% of its gross national product. The newly-elected President, Alan Garcia, stated that no more than 10% of the country's annual foreign exchange earnings will be paid to service the outstanding debt. The immigration article compares the policies of the United States and West Germany. Recently, the U.S. Congress passed legislation to deal with the influx of illegal aliens who migrate to the United States to escape poverty. And, the West German government took steps to stem the tide of immigrants entering the country claiming to seek political asylum but are actually seeking better living conditions. An activity sheet covering the content of the document and recommending additional resources conclude the document. (SM)

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RESPONDING TO THE CHALLENGE

BY

KIMBERLY CREWS

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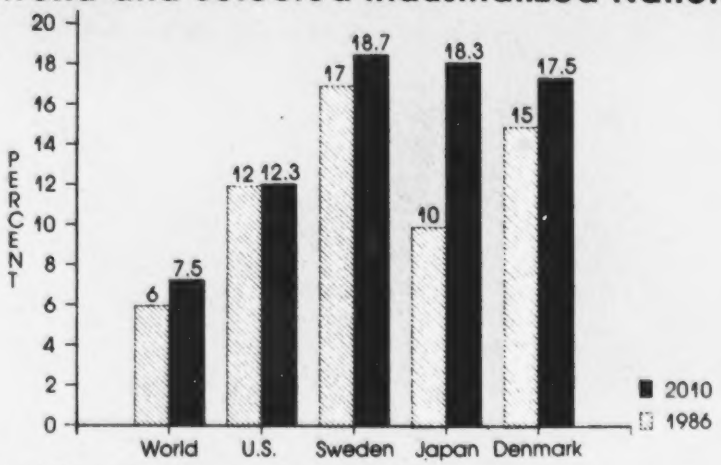
Responding to the Challenge

This issue of *Population Education Interchange* accompanies the Population Learning Series module, "Global Population Trends: Challenges Facing World Leaders." The student reading discusses the scope of population issues, world population dynamics, the factors that affect population growth in less developed countries, and population issues which world leaders must deal with now and in the future.

In the coming decades, country leaders will face challenges caused by many different kinds of population pressures. Leaders in countries with slow or no population growth must not only deal with the consequences of low growth, such as labor shortages, and an increasing proportion of elderly, but also with the possibility of spillover from countries with rapidly growing populations. On the other hand, leaders of high growth countries must deal with providing their populations with the basics, such as health care, adequate food, and education; they must find ways to employ their growing work forces; and they must find ways to pay off growing debts to foreign creditors without sacrificing social debts to their own populations.

Many world leaders are already acknowledging these concerns and are proposing ways to deal with them. For example, many countries with increasing elderly populations are making social reforms to adapt to this change. Leaders of some high population growth countries are coming up with new plans to pay off foreign debt, employ their populations, and provide adequate health and social services. The United States and some European countries are changing immigration laws in an attempt to ward off massive influxes of illegal immigrants.

Population 65 and Older, 1986 and 2010: World and Selected Industrialized Nations



Source: United Nations, Population Division, *World Population Prospects as Assessed in 1984*.

Japan's proportion of elderly will increase dramatically by 2010.

THE GROWING ELDERLY POPULATION IN INDUSTRIALIZED NATIONS

Focus on Japan

Many industrialized countries have a growing proportion of elderly in their populations. For example, 17 percent of Sweden's population is over age 65; in Denmark, the United States, and Japan, these figures are 15, 12, and 10 percent respectively. Japan's percentage in this age group is now relatively modest, but will nearly double, from 10 to 18.7 percent, by 2010, while the proportions in the other three countries increase by two percentage points or less (see graph above).

Japan's leaders are concerned with how to care for such a rapidly increasing elderly population. Like the U.S., Japan feared that its social security system would go bankrupt and in 1986 took steps to delay the age at which full pensions are received. Businesses had recently agreed to raise the retirement age from 55 to 60; now the government wants to raise it to 65.

In 1985, Japan passed legislation designed to: 1) unify several public pension systems by 1995, 2) reduce the tax burden of the working population, 3) ensure a balance between pension incomes of the elderly and living standards of workers, and 4) protect women by giving them their own benefits. Sweden and Denmark, with substantial elderly populations, have similarly altered their pension systems. Countries like the U.S., where elderly numbers will grow substantially only when the baby boom generation begins to retire after 2010, are studying the issues but making no dramatic reforms at this time.

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THE DEBT CRUNCH
Focus on Peru

Peru, with 20.2 million people, is the fifth most populous country in Latin America and one of only eight with more than 10 million. Of these eight countries, Peru has the lowest per capita income ($1,040 in 1986), one of the highest births per woman (4.3), the lowest life expectancy at birth (59 years), the highest infant mortality rate (99 infant deaths per 1,000 live births), and one of the highest percentages of population under age 15 (41). In terms of quality of life, then, Peru is one the least developed of Latin America's large countries.

In addition to its precarious development status, Peru, like other Latin American countries, is in a recession. Its poor economic status was caused by dependence on foreign borrowing in the 1970s, poor management of funds and projects, adverse climatic factors affecting agriculture, and the downturn of the world economy. By 1985, 50 percent of Peru's economically active population was unemployed or underemployed. In 1984, Peru's foreign debt was 59 percent of its Gross National Product and it paid 15.3 percent of export earnings in debt service.

In 1985, Peru elected a new president, Alan Garcia. He believes that the country cannot make full debt payments and at the same time improve the country's economy. He has thus proposed that his government bypass the International Monetary Fund and deal directly with foreign creditors. He has stated that no more than 10 percent of the country's annual foreign exchange earnings will be paid to service the outstanding debt. In his opinion, compliance with the previous payment schedule would keep his country in a recession which would make future debt payment and development efforts difficult, increase social tensions, and weaken democracy.

Population pressures and large foreign debts put countries like Peru in a double bind. On the one hand, improvements in living standards and access to basic services for poor people require increased public expenditures. But the international banks see these expenditures as a threat to debt service capacity and have threatened to withhold further lending unless they are curbed. Garcia has challenged the international financial community with his stand in limiting payment of interest.

IMMIGRATION
United States

Each year an undetermined number of illegal immigrants enter the United States in search of a better life. An estimated 50 to 60 percent of illegal immigrants are Mexicans fleeing unemployment, poverty, and high inflation in their country, where population is still growing rapidly. In the United States, concern over the influx of illegal immigrants prompted Congress to pass immigration reform legislation in October 1986. The new law contains three central provisions aimed at reducing the number of illegal aliens in the United States:

1) Employers who knowingly hire aliens not authorized to work in the U.S. will face civil penalties, such as fines and imprisonment.

2) Aliens who entered the U.S. illegally before January 1, 1982 will be granted temporary resident status. They can apply to become permanent resident aliens and later apply for citizenship.

3) Illegal aliens who worked at least 90 days in U.S. agriculture between May 1, 1985, and May 1986, will be given temporary resident status and after two years, can become permanent residents. In addition, the H2 program under which foreign farm workers are brought in temporarily for seasonal work will be simplified.

Advocates of the new law believe that it will reduce the number of illegal immigrants in the United States. At the same time, the agricultural provision will enable agriculture employers to maintain their cheap labor supply. Opponents argue that the sanctions on employers of illegal aliens may not be effective or will be difficult to implement. They also believe that the agricultural provision permits continued exploitation of farm labor, which could be done by Americans or legal residents if it were fairly paid. Many supporters of this legislation also feel that the legal immigration law should be altered; this issue was not dealt with in the 1986 legislation.

West Germany

In the past, West Germany was generous about accepting people seeking political asylum. Over the past three years, however, the number of asylum seekers has tripled; West German officials believe that many of these refugees are coming from Third World countries to earn a better living, rather than seek political asylum.

Refugees entering West Germany are allowed to remain until a trial is held to determine the validity of their status. During this time they receive a social-assistance allowance. Ultimately most requests for asylum are rejected, but it is estimated that fewer than half of rejected asylum seekers actually leave the country.

In order to keep an open door to those persons actually seeking political asylum, the West German government adopted several measures aimed against asylum seekers who come to West Germany to earn a more comfortable living. The measures include: 1) having more officials handling asylum applications; 2) extending from two to five years, the period during which asylum seekers cannot take a job (refugees from communist Eastern Europe are excluded); 3) fining international airlines who allow passenger entry into West Germany without proper documentation; and 4) expelling asylum seekers, who before entering West Germany, spent more than three months in another country where they were free from political persecution.

Groups in other European countries are also pressing for new immigration guidelines. Like West Germans, citizens of Switzerland and Sweden – countries where refugees have always been welcomed – are becoming skeptical with the recent increase of people from Third World nations seeking political asylum. Similar concerns are being voiced in Britain and France. These European nations are becoming less hospitable to refugees and other immigrants and are also taking steps to tighten immigration policies.

USING THE SIXTH EDITION UNITED STATES POPULATION DATA SHEET

Part A. Short Answer

Using the data and maps in the sixth edition of the United States Population Data Sheet, find:*

1. The five most populous states in 1985.
   a. The five most populous states in 2000.
2. The two largest (geographically) states.
   a. The two smallest (geographically) states.
3. The two most densely populated (most people per square mile) states.
   a. The two least densely populated states.
4. The two states which grew fastest (i.e., by the biggest percentage) between 1980 and 1985.
   a. The state which lost the greatest proportion of its population during this time period.
5. The state with the youngest population (i.e., the state with the highest percentage under age 15).
6. The state with the greatest percentage of elderly population.
7. The state with the highest number of births per 100 deaths.
   a. State the number of births per 100 deaths for this state and for the United States. Give at least two reasons why the number is so large for this state.
8. The state with the highest infant mortality rate.
   a. The state with the lowest infant mortality rate.
9. The state with the highest percentage of women in the labor force.
10. The region with the greatest proportion of Black residents.

Part B. Matching

1. Florida	a. has the highest percentage of college graduates
2. Colorado	b. has the highest percentage of high school dropouts
3. Louisiana	c. received the largest number of immigrants from abroad
4. Illinois	d. has the highest crime rate
5. California	e. one of the two states with the largest percentage of counties losing population

Part C. Follow-up

Using additional resources if necessary, find the answers to the following questions:

1. Utah has the youngest population of any state in the U.S. What causes this phenomenon?
2. The District of Columbia has a high dropout rate, but also has a high percentage of college graduates among persons over age 25. Find an explanation for this occurrence.
3. The maps on the back of the data sheet show net migration and population gain or loss. How is it possible for states which had out-migration to increase their population size?
4. Use the maps and other resources to explain the high infant mortality rates found in the southern states.

*The District of Columbia is not included as a state.

RESOURCES

Human Numbers, Human Needs, by Paul Harrison and John Rowley. 1984. International Planned Parenthood Federation, 18-20 Lower Regent Street, London SW1Y 4PW. 64 pp. $5.00.

A general reader for teachers and students stemming from reports of *People* magazine. Topics covered in the handbook include population growth and the effects of this growth on food, resources, the environment, health, education, and the economy.

Immigration to the U.S.: The Unfinished Story, by Leon F. Bouvier and Robert W. Gardner. *Population Bulletin*, Vol. 41, No. 4 (November 1986). Population Reference Bureau, 777 14th St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20005. 51 pp. $4.00 plus $1.00 shipping/handling.

A summary of the past immigration trends in the United States including an historical overview, and discussion of present trends, impact on the U.S. population growth, immigration law reform, and the outlook for the future.

Main Street America and the Third World, by John Maxwell Hamilton. 1986. Seven Locks Press, P.O. Box 27, Cabin John, MD 20818. 184 pp. $9.95.

Using a series of news stories that connect local events to distant foreign ones, the author successfully shows the concept of international interdependence. The book reveals the ties between American hometowns and Third World countries and provides students with schemes guaranteed to broaden their horizons.

Solving World Hunger: The U.S. Stake, by E. Boyd Wennergren et al. 1986. Seven Locks Press, P.O. Box 27, Cabin John, MD 20818. 102 pp. $7.95.

This book attempts to eliminate the information gap that exists among Americans about world hunger and the role and effectiveness of U.S. assistance programs. The reader is informed about all aspects of the food crisis and the role of U.S. assistance. In addition, the book contains information on educational programs designed to stimulate interest in this area.

The United States Population Data Sheet (sixth edition), by Carl Haub and Alexander von Cube. 1986. Population Reference Bureau, 777 14th St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20005. Wall chart, $2.00 plus $1.00 shipping/handling.

An 18½" by 24" wall chart with twenty-four columns of population data for the United States.

World Population in Transition, by Thomas W. Merrick. *Population Bulletin*, Vol. 41, No. 2 (April 1986). Population Reference Bureau (address above). 51 pp. $4.00 plus $1.00 shipping/handling.

A synopsis of world population issues including an historical overview and current trends. This bulletin includes the important debate about whether rapid population growth deters or stimulates economic growth.

World Hunger and Social Justice, by Gary E. McCuen. 1986. Gary E. McCuen Publications, Inc. 411 Mallalieu Drive, Hudson, Wisconsin 54016. 176 pp. $11.95.

From the Ideas in Conflict series, a collection of debates focusing on world hunger and its relationship to population growth, economic growth and foreign relations. This book gives the reader many points of view on each issue. Excellent as a classroom tool or a library resource. Extras include cartoon analysis and other exercises for individual or group discussion.

Answers to U.S. Data Sheet Worksheet

Part A. 1) CA, NY, TX, PA, IL. 1a) CA, TX, NY, FL, PA. 2) AK, TX. 2a) RI, DE. 3) NJ, RI. 3a) AK, WY. 4) AK, AZ. 4a) MI 5) UT 6) FL 7) AK 7a) 600 and 182, high proportion of people in childbearing ages; low percentage of elderly in this state. 8) SC 8a) ND 9) AK 10) South. Part B. 1) d 2) a 3) b 4) e 5) c.

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- "The Environment to Come: A Global Summary," March 1983
- "Food and Population: A Global Concern," December 1983
- "The American Family: Changes and Challenges," October 1984
- "World Population: Fundamentals of Growth," December 1984
- "The Food Crisis in Sub-Saharan Africa," March 1985
- "World Population: Toward the Next Century," May 1985
- "Women in the World: The Women's Decade and Beyond," April 1986
- "Population in Perspective: Regional Views," October 1986
- "Global Population Trends: Challenges Facing World Leaders," February 1987

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